

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Please find accompanying this response replacement sheets for Figs. 1 and 9-11 wherein amendments explained in the Remarks presented below are effected.

REMARKS

Claims 5-9 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-3 are rejected and claim 4 is withdrawn by the Examiner. These claims are now cancelled. Claim 1-3 are replaced by claims 5-7, and claim 4 is replaced by claim 9. Claim 9 is directed to the non-elected method but includes each feature of the product claims based on its dependency from claim 7 and hence should be allowed along the product claims.

DRAWING OBJECTIONS

Fig. 1 is objected to because the hatching is not clearly shown. The Office Action further states that the legend "Prior Art" is required on Figs. 9-11 to clarify the invention. Replacement Sheets of Fig. 1 having clarified hatching and Figs. 9-11 wherein legends "PRIOR ART" are added are appended hereto. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

OBJECTION TO ABSTRACT

The Examiner has objected to the abstract for exceeding 150 words in length and cites MPEP §608.01(b) which is based on 37 CFR 1.72(b). It is called to the Examiner's attention that the rule clearly states that the "abstract in an application filed under 35 U.S.C. 111 may not exceed 150 words in length." Since the present application is a National Stage application filed under 35 U.S.C. §371,

and *not* under 35 U.S.C. 111, it is respectfully submitted that the 150 word limit is inapplicable. The abstract is nonetheless amended to better relate the invention. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claim 1 is objected to because of wording difficulties. New claim 5 is worded to address the Examiner's concerns.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-3 are rejected as obvious over JP 2972566 ('566) in view of JP 4019961 ('961) under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Claims 1-3 are now cancelled rendering the rejection moot. However, insofar as the subject matter of new claims 5-7 reflects that of the cancelled claims applicants submit the following remarks.

Claim 5 now recites the step configuration of the present invention wherein the step is formed continuously around the circumference of the annular insert member so as to intersect valve stem openings. This is reflected in the following claim language:

said annular insert exterior circumferential surface including
a step extending circumferentially around said annular insert
exterior circumferential surface so as to intersect said first valve

stem openings, said step being circumferentially continuous with exceptions of the first valve stem openings[.]

Neither the '566 or '961 reference shows such a configuration.

The claimed configuration provides a seat ring assembly which yields better alignment of valves stems and reduces the stress on the valve stem because the step of the annular insert member engages a step of the valve body to avoid stress on the valve stem. This is specifically related in the specification as follows:

Further, because even when only the seat ring with insert 9 receives a force causing displacement and deformation in the downstream side direction from the valve body 28 which was subject to a tightening force of the piping flange 30 or fluid pressure, tube stem direction displacement of the seat ring with insert 9 is inhibited by press contact between the step 2 provided on the outer peripheral surface of the insert 1 of the seat ring with insert 9 and the step 19 provided on the inner peripheral surface of the valve body 18. As a result, the valve shaft 27 is not subject to shear stress, valve stem sealing performance is improved and increase in operating torque is prevented.

Substitute Specification, pg. 12. It will be appreciated that providing the step at the valve shaft openings increases the radially rigidity at the openings along with ensuring axial alignment with the valve body at the critical valve stem openings.

Claim 8 recites that the locking projection on the annular insert interior circumferential surface is disposed at the downstream end so as to define a downstream opening at the downstream end of the annular insert member that is smaller than an upstream opening defined by the upstream end of the annular insert

member. This is not true of the locking projections provided in the applied reference.

Each of the remaining dependent claims are dependent from claim 5 and derive patentability from the subject matter related therein in combination with the subject matter of claim 5.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the new claims are not obvious in view of the applied references for the reasons stated above. Favorable consideration of the claims and their allowance are respectfully requested.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

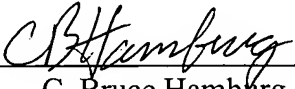
Applicants respectfully request a one month extension of time for responding to the Office Action. **The fee of \$130.00 for the extension is to be charged to deposit account 10-1250.**


If there is any discrepancy between the fee(s) due and the fee payment authorized in the Credit Card Payment Form PTO-2038 or the Form PTO-2038 is missing or fee payment via the Form PTO-2038 cannot be processed, the USPTO is hereby authorized to charge any fee(s) or fee(s) deficiency or credit any excess payment to Deposit Account No. 10-1250.


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In light of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in proper form for allowance of all claims and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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enc: Replacement drawing sheets of Figs. 1 and 9-11.